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**THE  
RANDOM  
HOUSE**

# College Dictionary

**Laurence Urdang**  
Editor in Chief  
**Stuart Berg Flexner**  
Managing Editor

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Based on  
**The Random House  
Dictionary of the  
English Language**  
The Unabridged Edition  
**Jess Stein**  
Editor in Chief  
**Laurence Urdang**  
Managing Editor

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# Preface

IN THE DECADES recently past, especially since World War II, the educational standards of the world have been extended to embrace more people than ever before. Literacy has increased enormously. Coupled with the technological advances of the period, the necessity for reading and study has resulted in an unprecedented interest in words.

The dictionary has traditionally been the only source of information on language for the majority of people. In it they expect to find how a word is spelled, how it may be hyphenated, how it is pronounced, what its various forms are, what its meanings are, and what its origins and history are. They also expect to find whether a word is technical or general, whether it can be used in polite company or not, and even whether someone who is called a certain word is justified in feeling offended. They want unfamiliar objects illustrated and particular places pinpointed on maps; they want biographical information, geographical, demographic, and political data, abbreviations, symbols, synonyms, antonyms, usage notes—in short, people expect to find condensed between the covers of a dictionary the knowledge of the world as reflected in their language. Above all, they demand that this knowledge be accurate and up to date. Indeed, why not? The dictionary is often the only reference book of any kind that many people ever own.

That these prodigious demands are met is, of course, no accident. A dictionary is the product of specialists, linguists, and highly trained editors who are devoted to researching language and information and to interpreting it and presenting it in understandable form.

*The Random House College Dictionary* is an abridgment of *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language—The Unabridged Edition*, and its style follows that of the *RHD*. No dictionary, no matter how extensive, could record the entire English language. It is obvious, then, that the editors of any dictionary are compelled to exercise discretion in what is to be included. The goal cannot be completeness: the goal must be judicious selectivity. There is no dearth of re-

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# THE RAND HOUSE College Dictionary

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1. pertaining to Ceylon, its native people, or their language.  
 —n. 2. a member of the Sinhalese people. 3. an Indic language that is the language of most of Ceylon, including Colombo. Also, Sinhalese. [var. of *Sinhalese* < Skt *Sinhala*(s) Ceylon + -an]  
**sin-gle** (sɪŋˈɡl), *adj.*, *n.* —*adj.* 1. one only; only one in number; sole: a *single example*. 2. of, pertaining to, or suitable for one person only: a *single bed*. 3. unique; solitary: *He was the single survivor*. 4. unmarried. 5. pertaining to the unmarried state. 6. of one against one, as combat or fight. 7. consisting of only one part, element, or member: a *single lens*. 8. sincere; honest; undivided: *single devotion*. 9. separate; individual. 10. uniform; applicable to all. 11. (of a flower) having only one set of petals. 12. *Brit.* of only moderate strength or body, as a horse. 13. (of the eye) seeing rightly. —*n.* 14. to pick or choose out from others (usually fol. by *out*): *to single out a fact for special mention*. 15. *Baseball*, *n.* to cause the advance of (a base runner) by a one-base hit. *b.* to cause (a run) to be scored by a one-base hit (often fol. by *in*). —*s.* 16. *Baseball*, to make a one-base hit. 17. *Obs.* (of a horse) to go at single-foot. —*n.* 18. one person or thing; a single one. 19. an accommodation for one person, as a hotel room, cabin on a ship, etc. 20. Also called *one-base hit*. *Baseball*, a base hit that enables a batter to reach first base safely. 21. *singles*, (*constructed as sing.*) a match with one player on each side. 22. *Golf*, twosome (def. 4). 23. *Cricket*, a hit for which one run is scored. 24. *Informal*, a one-dollar bill: *a five and five singles*. [late ME; ME *single* < MF < L *single*(us); see *SINGLE*] —*Syn.* 1. distinct, particular. 4. unpaired. 14. select. 18. individual.  
**sin-gle-act-ing** (sɪŋˈɡl əkˈtɪŋ), *adj.* (of a reciprocating engine, pump, etc.) having pistons accomplishing work only in one direction. Cf. *double-acting* (def. 1).  
**sin-gle-ac-tion** (sɪŋˈɡl əkˈʃən), *adj.* (of a firearm) requiring the cocking of the hammer before firing each shot: a *single-action revolver*.  
**sin-gle bond**, *Chem.* a chemical linkage consisting of one covalent bond between two atoms of a molecule, represented in chemical formulas by one line or two vertical dots, as C-H or C-H.  
**sin-gle-breast-ed** (sɪŋˈɡl brɛstˈɪd), *adj.* (of a garment, esp. a coat or jacket) having a single button or row of buttons in front for the center closing. Cf. *double-breasted*.  
**sin-gle-cross** (sɪŋˈɡl krɒs/ˈkrɒs/), *n.* *Genetics*, a cross between two inbred lines.  
**sin-gle cut**, *Jewelry*, a simple form of brilliant cut, having eight facets above and eight facets below the girdle. Also called *half-brilliant cut*.  
**sin-gle-cut** (sɪŋˈɡl kʊt/), *adj.* noting a file having a series of parallel cutting ridges in one direction only.  
**sin-gle en-try**, *Bookkeeping*, a simple accounting system noting only amounts owed by and due to a business. Cf. *double entry*. —*sin-gle-en-try*, *adj.*  
**sin-gle file**, a line of persons or things arranged one behind the other; Indian file.  
**sin-gle-foot** (sɪŋˈɡl fʊt/), *n.* 1. *rack*. —*s.* 2. (of a horse) to go at a rack.  
**sin-gle-hand-ed** (sɪŋˈɡl hænd/), *adj.* 1. accomplished or done by one person alone; unaided. 2. having, using, or requiring the use of only one hand or one person. —*adv.* 3. by oneself; alone; without aid. —*sin-gle-hand-ed-ly*, *adv.* —*sin-gle-hand-ed-ness*, *n.*  
**sin-gle-heart-ed** (sɪŋˈɡl hɑːrtˈɪd), *adj.* sincere and undivided in feeling or spirit; dedicated.  
**sin-gle-mind-ed** (sɪŋˈɡl maɪnd/), *adj.* 1. having or showing a single aim or purpose: a *single-minded program*. 2. dedicated; steadfast. —*sin-gle-mind-ed-ly*, *adv.* —*sin-gle-mind-ed-ness*, *n.*  
**sin-gle-ness** (sɪŋˈɡl nɪs/), *n.* the state or quality of being single.  
**sin-gle-phase** (sɪŋˈɡl fāz/), *adj.* *Elect.* noting or pertaining to a circuit having an alternating current with one phase or with phases differing by 180°.  
**sin-gle quote**, one pair of single quotation marks, written as (" ") and used esp. for a quotation within another quotation: *He said, "I told you so."* [Open sesame when you want to enter the mountain.] Cf. *double quote*.  
**sin-gle-shot** (sɪŋˈɡl ʃɒt/), *adj.* (of a firearm) requiring loading before each shot; not having a cartridge magazine.  
**sin-gle-space** (sɪŋˈɡl speɪs/), *n.* —*spaced*, —*space-ing*. —*s.* 1. to type (copy) on each line space. —*s.* 2. to type copy leaving no blank spaces between lines.  
**sin-gle span-ish bur-ton**, a tackle having a runner as well as the fall supporting the load. See *diag.* at *tackle*.  
**sin-gle stand-ard**, 1. a single set of principles or rules applying to everyone, as a single moral code applying to both men and women. Cf. *double standard*. 2. *monometallism*.  
**sin-gle-stick** (sɪŋˈɡl stɪk/), *n.* 1. a short, heavy stick. 2. (formerly) a wooden stick held in one hand, used instead of a sword in fencing. *b.* fencing with such a stick.  
**sin-glet** (sɪŋˈɡlɪt/), *n.* *Chiefly Brit.* a man's undershirt or jersey.  
**sin-gle tape**, See under *magnetic tape*.  
**sin-gle tax**, *Econ.* a tax, as on land, that constitutes the sole source of public revenue. —*sin-gle-tax*, *adj.*  
**sin-gle-ton** (sɪŋˈɡl tən/), *n.* 1. something occurring singly. 2. *Cards*, a card that is the only one of a suit in a hand.  
**sin-gle-track** (sɪŋˈɡl træk/), *adj.* having a narrow scope: one-track: a *single-track mind*.  
**sin-gle-tree** (sɪŋˈɡl tri/), *n.* whiffletree. [var. of *whiffletree*]  
**sin-gle whip**, See under *whip* (def. 20). See *diag.* at *tackle*.  
**sin-gly** (sɪŋˈɡli/), *adv.* 1. apart from others; separately. 2. one at a time; as single units. 3. single-handed; alone. [ME *singlely*]  
**sin-g-song** (sɪŋˈsɒŋ/ˌsɒŋ/), *n.* 1. verse, or a piece of verse, of a ringing or monotonous character. 2. monotonous rhythmic cadence, tone, or sound. 3. *Brit.* a group sing. —*adj.* 4. monotonous in rhythm.  
**sin-g-spiel** (sɪŋˈspɛl/; Ger. sɪŋˈʃpɛl/), *n.* a German opera, esp. of the 18th century, using spoken dialogue. [Cf. *lit.*, *sing-play*]  
**sin-gu-lar** (sɪŋˈɡjə-lər/), *adj.* 1. extraordinary; remarkable; exceptional: a *singular success*. 2. unusual or strange; odd; different: *singular behavior*. 3. being the only one of its kind; unique: a *singular example*. 4. separate; individual. 5. *Gram.* noting or pertaining to a member of the category of number indicating that a word form has one referent or denotes one person, place, thing, or instance, as boy, a singular noun, or goes, a singular form of the verb. Cf. *dual* (def. 4), *plural* (def. 4). 6. *Logic*, of or pertaining to something individual, specific, or not general. 7. *Obs.* personal; private. 8. *Obs.* single. —*n.* 9. *Gram.* the singular number. 10. a form in the singular. [ME < L *singularis*(s). See *SINGULAR*, -*ize*] —*sin-gu-lar-ly*, *adv.* —*Syn.* 1-4. peculiar. 2. bizarre, queer, curious. 3. uncommon, rare. —*Ant.* 1. usual.  
**sin-gu-lar-ize** (sɪŋˈɡjə-lə-ɪz/), *v.t.* —*ized*, —*iz-ing*. *Chiefly Brit.* singularize. —*sin-gu-lar-iz-a-tion*, *n.*  
**sin-gu-lar-ity** (sɪŋˈɡjə-lər-ɪ-ti/), *n.*, *pl.* —*-ties* for 2. 1. the state, fact, or quality of being singular. 2. a singular, unusual, or unique quality. [ME *singularitas* < LL *singularitās*]  
**sin-gu-lar-ize** (sɪŋˈɡjə-lə-ɪz/), *v.t.* —*ized*, —*iz-ing*. to make singular. Also, *esp. Brit.*, singularise. —*sin-gu-lar-iz-a-tion*, *n.*  
**sinh** (sɪŋh/), *n.* *Math.* hyperbolic sine. [sin(us) + a (vrna-soul)]  
**Sin-ha-lese** (sɪnˈhə-lɛz/, -lɛz/), *adj.*, *n.*, *pl.* —*-lesee*. Sinhalese.  
**Sin-i-cism** (sɪn-ɪˈsɪz-əm/), *n.* something characteristic of or peculiar to the Chinese. [Sinitic Chinese (< ML *Siniticus*) < MGk *Sinitikós* = LGk *Sin(ikē)* the Chinese + -*ikos* (-ic) + -*ism*]  
**Sin-ing** (sɪn-ɪŋ/), *n.* a city in and the capital of Chinghai, in W China. 300,000 (est. 1957). Also, *Hailan-g*.  
**sin-is-ter** (sɪn-ɪˈstər/), *adj.* 1. threatening or portending evil, harm, or trouble; ominous. 2. malevolent; evilly intended. 3. *Heraldry*, noting the side of an escutcheon or achievement of arms that is to the left of the hypothetical bearer (opposed to *dexter*). 4. *Archaic*, of or on the left side; left. [late ME < L. of the left hand or side, hence unfavorable, injurious (from the Roman belief that unfavorable omens appear on one's left)] —*sin-is-ter-ly*, *adv.* —*Syn.* 1. inauspicious, portentous. —*Ant.* 1. benign.  
**sinistr-**, a learned borrowing from Latin meaning "left." "on the left," used in the formation of compound words: *sinistrous*. Also, *esp. before a consonant*, *sinistro-*. [Cf. *L. sinister*, *s.* of *sinister*]  
**sin-is-tral** (sɪn-ɪˈstrəl/), *adj.* 1. of, pertaining to, or on the left side; left (opposed to *dextral*). 2. left-handed. [late ME < ML *sinistrālis*] —*sin-is-tral-ly*, *adv.*  
**sin-is-tro-gy-ra-tion** (sɪn-ɪˈstrɒ-ɡjə-rɪ-ʃən/), *n.* *Optics*, *Chem.* levorotation. —*sin-is-tro-gy-ric* (sɪn-ɪˈstrɒ-ɡj-ɪ-ɪk/), *adj.*  
**sin-is-tro-se** (sɪn-ɪˈstrɒs/ˌsɪ-nɪs-trɒs/), *adj.* *Bot.* (from a point of view at the center of the spiral) rising spirally from right to left, as a stem (opposed to *dextrorse*). [Cf. *L. sinister*(us), *lit.*, turned leftwards, contr. of *sinistrorsus*, var. of *sinistrorsus*. See *sinistrorsus*, *var. of*]  
**sin-is-trous** (sɪn-ɪˈstrɒs/), *adj.* 1. ill-omened; unlucky; disastrous. 2. *sinistral*; left. —*sin-is-trous-ly*, *adv.*  
**Sin-it-ic** (sɪn-ɪˈtɪk/), *n.* 1. a branch of Sino-Tibetan consisting of the various local languages and dialects whose speakers share literary Chinese as their standard language. —*adj.* 2. of or pertaining to the Chinese, their language, or their culture. [Cf. *L. Sin(ae)* the Chinese (< LGk *Sinai* + -*itic*)]  
**sink** (sɪŋk/), *v.* —*sank* or, often, *sunk*; *sunk* or *sunk-en*; *sink-ing*, *n.* —*s.* 1. to fall, drop, or descend gradually to a lower level. 2. to go down toward or below the horizon. 3. to slope downward; dip. 4. to displace the volume of an underlying substance or object and become submerged or partially submerged (often fol. by *in* or *into*): *The battleship sank within two hours. His foot sank in the mud.* 5. to fall or collapse slowly from weakness, fatigue, etc. 6. to become absorbed in or gradually to enter a state or condition (usually fol. by *in* or *into*): *to sink into slumber*. 7. to pass or fall into some lower state or condition. 8. to fall in physical strength or health. 9. to become lower in loudness, tone, or pitch. 10. to enter or permeate the mind; become known or understood (usually fol. by *in* or *into*): *I repeated it till the words sank in.* 11. to become hollow, as the cheeks. 12. to sit, retire, or lie (usually fol. by *down*, *in*, *on*, etc.): *He sank down on the bench.* —*s.* 13. to cause to fall, drop, or descend gradually. 14. to cause to become submerged. 15. to lower or depress the level of. 16. to bury, plant, or lay (a pipe, conduit, etc.) into or as into the ground. 17. to bring to a worse or lower state or status. 18. to reduce in amount, extent, intensity, etc. 19. to lower in loudness, tone, or pitch. 20. to invest in the hope of making a profit or gaining some other return. 21. to dig, bore, or excavate (a hole, shaft, well, etc.). —*n.* 22. a basin or receptacle connected with a water supply, used for washing. 23. a low-lying, poorly drained area where waters collect or disappear by sinking down into the ground or by evaporation. 24. sinkhole (def. 2). 25. a place of vice or corruption. 26. a drain or sewer. 27. any pond or pit for sewage or waste, as a cesspool or a pool for industrial wastes. [ME; OE *sincan*(n); c. D *sinken*, G *sinken*, IceI *sökka*, Goth *sinan*]  
**sink-age** (sɪŋk-ɪdʒ/), *n.* the act, process, or an amount of sinking.  
**sink-er** (sɪŋk-ər/), *n.* 1. a person or thing that sinks. 2. a person employed in sinking, as one who sinks shafts. 3. a weight, as of lead, for sinking a fishing line or net below the surface of the water. 4. *Slang*, a doughnut.  
**sink-hole** (sɪŋk-ˈhɒl/), *n.* 1. a hole formed in soluble rock by the action of water, serving to conduct surface water to an underground passage. 2. Also called *sink*, a depressed area in which waste or drainage collects. [ME]  
**Sin-kiang** (sɪn-ˈkɪŋɡ/; Chin. sɪn-ˈkɪŋɡ/), *n.* the westernmost division of China, bordering Tibet, India, the Soviet Union, and Mongolia; formerly a province, 5,640,000 (est. 1957); 635,829 sq. mi. Cap.: Urumchi. Official name, *Sin-kiang-Uighur Auton-omous Re-gion* (sɪn-ˈkɪŋɡ-ˈweɪ-ɡər-ˈgɪən/; Chin. sɪn-ˈkɪŋɡ-ˈweɪ-ɡɒr-ˈgɪən/).  
**sink-ing fund**, a fund to extinguish an indebtedness, usually a bond issue.  
**sink-ing spell**, a temporary decline, as in health.  
**sin-less** (sɪn-lɪs/), *adj.* free from or without sin. [ME *sinles*, *s.* *synlas*]  
**sin-ner** (sɪn-ər/), *n.* a person who sins; transgressor. [ME]